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CIVIL DEFENSE ACTIVITIES OF THE ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

~~Joint Report by Director of the Division of Biological Medicine~~
~~Problem~~

THE PROBLEM

1. To clarify responsibilities of the AEC in the field of civil defense and to make assignments therefor.

~~Background and Discussion~~

2. The statutory basis for AEC activities in civil defense lies in the following provisions of the Atomic Energy Act:

- a. Sec. 1(a) states as a declaration of policy that the development and utilization of atomic energy shall be "subject at all times to the paramount objective of assuring the common defense and security."
- b. Sections 3(a), 4(c)(2), 5(a)(4), 5(c)(2), 7(c) and 12(a)(2) express, in part, a policy of guarding against the hazards of atomic energy. These provisions deal with the control of hazards in research, production and use of fissionable material.
- c. Sections 1(b)(2) and 10(a)(2) enunciate the policy of dissemination of information in the interests of scientific progress.

3. Recent developments in other Federal agencies connected with civil defense are briefly summarized as follows:

- a. By directive of March 27, 1948 Secretary of Defense Forrestal created an Office of Civil Defense Planning within the National Military Establishment "to provide for the development

C.D. Plan

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of detailed plans for, and the establishment of, an integrated national program of civil defense; to secure proper coordination and direction of all civil defense matters affecting the NME; and to provide an effective means of liaison between the NME and other governmental and private agencies on questions of civil defense." Mr. Russell J. Hopley was appointed OCDF Director, being responsible directly to the Secretary of Defense.

- b. A comprehensive report, "Civil Defense for National Security," was submitted by the Director of OCDF to the Secretary of Defense on October 1, 1948. This report commonly referred to as the "Hopley Report," strongly recommended the establishment of a permanent Office of Civil Defense in the NME to be responsible for both the planning and operational aspects of civil defense in accordance with the detailed scheme outlined in the Report. This included direction and coordination at the Federal level of the work of state and local civil defense organizations. The recommendations of the Hopley Report were never instituted although the OCDF continued to function in its planning capacity until recently.
- c. By Presidential directive of March 3, 1949 the National Security Resources Board was instructed "to assume . . . leadership in civil defense planning and to develop a program which will be adequate for the Nation's needs." The Presidential memo stated "Under present conditions the essential need of the

Federal Government in the area of civil defense is peacetime planning rather than operation of a full-scale civil defense program. Therefore I see no need to establish at this time a permanent organization, such as a proposed Office of Civil Defense. Rather, I see a definite necessity to continue planning for civil defense and an immediate need to fix in a responsible agency definite leadership for such planning. Since peacetime civil defense planning is related to, and a part of, over-all mobilization planning of the Nation in peacetime, I have concluded that the NSRB, which is charged with advising me concerning the coordination of such over-all mobilization planning, is the appropriate agency which should also exercise leadership in civil defense planning."

- d. In accordance with a directive from the Acting Chairman, NSRB, dated March 29, 1949, "A Report on Civil Defense Planning" was prepared by the Office of Mobilization Procedures and Organization, NSRB. This report, hereafter referred to as the "Gill Report" summarized the current situation as of May 1949 with respect to Federal government civil defense thinking and activities. AEC among other concerned agencies was asked to contribute a statement as to its civil defense situation. This statement is attached hereto as Appendix A. The Gill Report envisages the broad field of civil defense as comprised of the following separable functions:
- (1) Civilian participation in active defense
 - (2) Wartime disaster relief

- (3) Peacetime disaster relief
- (4) Internal security
- (5) Volunteer war activities

The Report recommends that "primary responsibilities" for the first two functions only be made at this time to the appropriate agencies--the NME in the case of (1) above and the General Services Administration in the case of (2). The AEC is included as one of several "participating agencies" associated with the GSA in its primary responsibility for wartime disaster relief.

- e. The "participating agencies" were asked to submit to NSRB directly, comments on these proposals. The reply of AEC is contained in a letter from Chairman Lilienthal to Mr. Steelman, dated 7-7-49 stating in part:

"We note the proposed assignment to the GSA of primary planning responsibility in the immediate future for wartime disaster relief and the listing of the AEC as a participating agency in this planning program. The Commission will, of course, be glad to assist the GSA in the fulfillment of its responsibilities The Commission feels that it can make an important contribution by making available to the GSA technical information on which planning for disaster relief against radiological warfare must necessarily be based We anticipate that the Commission's role in civil defense planning will be in large measure one of supplying information to other agencies with primary responsibility for civil defense planning."

- f. By terms of Presidential Reorganization Plan No. 4 of 1949, the NSRB was transferred, effective 8-20-49 from the Department of National Defense to the Executive Office of the President.

~~4. Since an emergency may arise at any time, and since no overall plan now has been accepted, the Atomic Energy Commission to date has done the~~

followings:

- a. Reviewed the hazards that might exist in its own installations in event of an atomic disaster or attack and considered the best ways of meeting them. Special studies have been made of Oak Ridge, Hanford, and the Washington office, representing problems of fairly typical nature.
- b. Studied and determined upon and is assembling sample quantities of types of radiation detection instruments for use in event of an emergency.
- c. Initiated organization of groups of emergency monitoring personnel in Atomic Energy Commission major installations, prepared to make radiation hazard surveys of any area attacked.
- d. Collected (and is continuing to collect) all available data on the effects of atomic explosions on man, animals, plants, and physical structures. Knowledge gained from September, 1945 up to now from Hiroshima and Nagasaki is of great value, as are the Bikini and Eniwetok data.
- e. Carried on (and is continuously emphasizing) research in the effect of radiation on living matter and its constituents. This is being done both in Atomic Energy Commission, university, hospital, and other research laboratories. This work is essential to any attempts toward protection or treatment.
- f. Cooperated with the ENE in providing data for and reviewing the Hopley report on Civil Defense ~~Planning~~.

- g. Cooperated with the NBS in the preparation of a Weapons Effect Handbook, containing basic data essential for civil defense planning.
- h. Considered with NBS the problem of radiological warfare.
- i. Engaged in a fellowship program which includes the medical and biological sciences as they relate to atomic energy and health physics. The objective is to add to the pool of trained personnel for the country's atomic energy enterprise. Such trained personnel may well prove useful also in radiological defense measures and in training others for such purposes.
- j. Sponsored, in cooperation with the Armed Forces special training courses in the medical aspects of atomic energy for selected military, naval, airforce, and PHB officers at Oak Ridge, Los Alamos and four AEC regional training centers.
- k. Contracted with the University of Michigan Survey Research Center for a survey of the state of knowledge and attitudes toward radiation hazards (AEC 157 series).
- l. Participated on the Interdepartmental Working Committee of the NBS on underground structures and protective construction.
- m. Through participation on another classified Committee, is assuring that civil defense problems are considered in any future test of explosives.
- n. Participated on Interdivisional Committee on Educational Implications of Atomic Energy. (Established by FSA, Office of Education).

Insert

5. After a full discussion of Civil Defense problems the Advisory Committee for Biology and Medicine at the 13th meeting held on October 8-9, 1948 unanimously endorsed the recommendation of the Division of Biology and Medicine "that in view of the danger to human life, and in fact to all life, that the AEC should feel responsible and take an active role in imparting general knowledge and data to the public." The Advisory Committee for Biology and Medicine further recommended at the 14th meeting on February 12, 1949 as follows:

"The people of the United States naturally look to the Atomic Energy Commission for precise information regarding atomic energy, urgent requests for such information are being made, and it should therefore be understood that one of the important obligations of the Commission is to disseminate the information.

"The Advisory Committee for Biology and Medicine recommends that the Atomic Energy Commission select and appoint a staff member to give his entire attention to collecting the necessary information and to studying the relations and activities of the Atomic Energy Commission in relation to agencies concerned with defense of the civilian population and the training of appropriate personnel to handle disaster due to atomic warfare.

"The identity, programs and personnel of groups concerned with Civilian Defense should be determined and listed. The type and range of information that the Atomic Energy Commission can release to such organizations should be determined and formulated, and insofar as is not clearly inconsistent with national interest, the Atomic Energy Commission should disseminate facts regarding the extent and limitations of atomic energy, this dissemination having as its purpose allaying extravagant fears and creating a consciousness of real dangers. We believe that a well and truly-informed public is the best guarantee of effective organization and maintenance of disaster relief. We would, therefore, recommend that the above-mentioned staff member pursue a long term study of the relationships with civilian defense agencies, in order to improve them and stimulate their organization as well and as soon as possible."

Conclusion

6. With the recent Presidential announcement of a Russian atomic explosion, the urgency of ^{active participation in the nation's} ~~the AEC~~ ^{actively prosecuting a positive civil} defense program within the framework of its statutory and delegated obligations is increased materially. *to participate*

7. ~~The AEC has sufficient statutory authority upon which to base~~ *in* ~~a civil defense program.~~ In addition there is the designation of the AEC by the NSRB as a participating agency in the program of wartime disaster relief, overall responsibility for which is assigned to the GSA. It might be mentioned that the organizational shift of the NSRB to the Executive Office of the President serves to strengthen the position of the NSRB as a direct agent of the President and hence lends additional weight to these assignments.

Important 8. Since the release of the Presidential announcement there have been several articles in the public press emphasizing the lack of concrete results to date in the field of civil defense planning. Thus, even disregarding the primary consideration of the public welfare, it is imperative in the interests of continued favorable public relations for the AEC, to announce publicly ^{the} ~~an AEC~~ ^{contribution to} ~~program for~~ civil defense.

RECOMMENDATIONS

9. It is therefore recommended that the Commission:

- Reaffirm*
- a. Recognize that the AEC has a definite responsibility to provide to the proper agencies and to the public all scientific, technical or informational data pertinent to the problem of

civil defense planning, the release of which will not jeopardize the National security.

b. Note that the Division of Biology and Medicine has responsibility for coordination of the civil defense activities of the Commission and for liaison of these activities with the NSRB, the NSC, the GSA, and other interested agencies.

c. Note that the divisions of the Commission are responsible for the preparation of information in the following categories: *and ~~technical~~ ^{technical consultal}*

The Division with primary responsibility is noted:

(1) Blast effects on structures and utilities	Division of Engineering Div. of Biology and Medicine
* (2) Shielding and shelters	Same as (1)
(3) Blast effects on personnel	Division of Biology & Medicine
(4) Burns	" " " "
* (5) Ionizing radiation injuries	" " " "
* (6) Radioactive decontamination	Div. of Biology and Medicine Division of Engineering
* (7) Medical Care for casualties and refugees	Division of Biology and Medicine
* (8) Radiological safety detection and measurement	Division of Production Div. of Biology & Medicine
(9) Educational and information programs	Div. of Pub & Tech Inf Div. of Biology and Medicine

d. Note that the following unclassified papers and manual will be prepared for public dissemination in connection with AEC's responsibility in civil defense.

(1) A paper for doctors on treatment of persons exposed to radiation.

(2) A paper for the engineering profession and construction industry, "Atomic Bombs vs. Buildings."

~~(3) A paper for city planners re Atomic Energy Aspects of Disaster, etc.~~

(4) A manual for operation and maintenance of monitoring instruments, with standards of tolerance.

(5) A paper on decontamination.

~~(6) A paper for the general public.~~

e. Approve for dispatch the following:

(1) A letter to the Acting Chairman, NSRB from the Chairman, AEC such as that in Appendix B.

(2) A letter to the Executive Secretary, NSC from the Chairman, such as that in Appendix C.

f. Approve for transmittal with the above letters the statement "The City of Washington and an Atomic Bomb Attack," attached as Appendix D.

g. Note that a press release will be issued stating the role of AEC in civil defense and outlining the program approved for action.

h. Note that the Joint Committee will be informed of the action approved in this paper.

and the MLC